

Speaker Registration/Testimony

Name Alan B. Burdick
 Phone 808-486-1018
 Email Burdick808@gmail.com
 Meeting Date 05-10-2017
 Council/PH Committee Council
 Agenda Item Bill 23
 Your position on the matter Support
 Representing Self
 Organization
 Do you wish to speak at the hearing? No

RECEIVED
 CITY CLERK
 C & C OF HONOLULU
 2017 MAY -9 PM 1:38

Parks and other quiet open spaces are under constant encroachment from private interests – and the City! Honolulu needs a strong ordinance protecting our Parks from changes in use unless there has been open, public discussion and City Council approval of any significant changes in the way our Parks are used. This includes, in particular, any authorization for the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) to conduct activities in our Parks. Because DES is inherently a revenue-generating agency. This is exactly what Bill 23 is designed to do.

Regrettably, the Council needs to enact such an Ordinance to prevent City Administrations from changing uses of Parks without public knowledge, input, or approval.

Written
 Testimony

A key recent example involves Thomas Square Park. It is state land that is used by the City pursuant to a Governor's executive order (EO). See HRS §46-65.5, which states, with no "ifs, ands, or buts," that "Thomas Square shall be maintained as a public park." Late last year, the City issued an Environmental Assessment (EA) for "improvements" at Thomas Square. The EA, which was more than 200 pages long, completely fails to mention that the City had previously petitioned the State Board of Land and Natural Resources, by letter from DES dated April 28, 2016, to amend the EO to permit DES to administer the Park pursuant to a "Thomas Square Master Plan," which is composed of 9 slides in a slideshow that identifies new plantings in the Park, but ignores any changes in use of the Park. It is clear from the letter, however, that the purpose of the proposed transfer to DES would be to make major changes in the use of Thomas Square to something other than a park. That would be in violation of the State statute, but the City failed to acknowledge that fact.

We who joined together to oppose that radical change in the administration of Thomas Square do not know even now whether the City is still planning to turn Thomas Square over to DES, if it can get State approval.

This situation at Thomas Square is just one key example of why we need Bill 23 to be enacted as an Ordinance. Conversion of our Parks into revenue-generating facilities, if

MISC. COM. 2674

allowed at all, must be done only after open public debate, with the City Council – not the City Administration - as the ultimate decision-maker.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

Testimony
Attachment
Accept Terms
and 1
Agreement